Community Mobilisation

An analytical Frame of Reference for Project Personnel and Project Managers

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We should emphasise that the work remains an analytical framework. We, therefore, desisted from any elaborate illustrations that would detract from the main focus of the study.

FOREWORD

" *Community Mobilization (An Analytical Frame of Reference.)* " is a timely and indispensable handbook for development agents and organisations. It is a detailed, extensive examination of the conditions necessary for the effective transformation of communities by change agents through the complex process of managing development services and facilities, that is, project management. In executing this major task Kumekpor and Kumekpor analyse the managerial role of change agents as it relates directly to the beneficiary community, on one hand and other relevant individuals and organizations on the other.

Management, recognize the authors, is both a delicate affair and a complex social process. It involves planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating and control. The managerial behaviour of change agents does not take place in a vacuum. Rather, like any human behaviour, it occurs within social contexts that determine its likelihood of occurrence and the different forms that it takes. It influences and is influenced by the social context within which it occurs. This social context consists of other individuals, groups and the socio-cultural values of recipient communities.

The management role of the change agent is, therefore, not as easy as it may appear to the outsider. On the contrary, the authors rightly recognize that it is "a delicate endeavour " (p.28) for it" involves more complex and complicated processes than are apparent to the uninitiated and must, therefore, be approached with much careful understanding of the processes involved" (p.63). From this vantage point the authors then effectively unravel and identify these complex and complicated processes involved in management by change agents.

In accomplishing this timely task the authors provide useful and necessary guidelines for change agents and allied development organizations, guidelines that are highly instrumental in enhancing project management.

To ensure the realization of this key objective detailed and exhaustive examination is made of the complex social relationships and processes involving the change agent, a key actor, and many actors within the larger environment.

Effective project management by change agents positively affects the quality of life of community members. A critical task of the change agent, then is to influence acceptance of innovation or change. This necessarily requires basic understanding not only of the social and cultural values of the target community, but also of the core concepts and processes relating to community and social change. This would enable change agents to successfully diffuse the new trait or idea or practice to the adopting community. But even at this level community participation in managerial decision making is of great importance for effective project management.

Community participation in every aspect of the project is essential if it is to be successful. In other words the community should be actively involved in the planning, organising, staffing directing of the project as well as in its coordination, control and, ultimately, maintenance. In this way community members will see themselves and be seen by others as equal partners in the project management effort.

Participation leads to high morale, identification with the project and therefore, acceptance of change community to the community. It is important to note however, that the change agent's management does not occur in isolation. On the contrary, this managerial behaviour is influenced by many other actors within the environment.

The management effort of the change agent is only one component of a larger social process. As a result, Kumekpor and Kumekpor adopt the open systems approach to the understanding of project management by the change agent. This approach locates project management activity within a wider complex of social context. It is linked to many other social processes, organizations and individuals.

All these are important actors in project management. These other actors include the parent organisations, professionals and para-professionals, government, NGOs and international funding organizations. It is of crucial importance for each of these actors to have a clear definition of the objectives of the project. This would forestall possible future confusion.

Moreover, the specific roles of each actor in relation to the project have to be clearly defined. Hence, the authors clearly describe in detail the nature and scope of responsibilities of the various actors in the project management process: their specific roles and relationships, their lines of action and interaction, and how all this affects the management behaviour of the change agent and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the project namely, the acceptance of change that enhances the quality of life of community members.

This handbook, then is of critical importance to change agents, social welfare officers, social influential individuals, community leaders, traditional office holders, NGOs, government institutions and academics. It is an interesting example of Applied Sociology. It is an invaluable guide to effective management of development services and facilities. It has far reaching practical implications with regard to the need for transforming communities by means of effective project management. It is unquestionably an indispensable tool for human and social development. Development agents, organizations and the general reading audience will find it both educative and practical, and intellectually refreshing and stimulating.

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CHAPTER ONE
FRAME OF REFERENCE

In our search to evolve more effective and meaningful ways of getting the people of developing countries to improve upon their living conditions, many different approaches have been embarked upon to effect changes in the social systems. These efforts have had varying degrees of success to complete failure.

Much of the work carried out on rural problems and community development in Ghana remain, to a large extent, descriptive. There are, to our knowledge, few if any, local attempts to utilise the vast amount of documentation on social development planning and programming to formulate conceptual analytical schemes or paradigms to explain, predict and effectively direct the impact of social change that continues to plague and shake the very basis of our society.

This document therefore basically attempts at contributing to improve upon the effectiveness of project formulation and implementation. It is therefore intended to help reduce **discrepancies** between *project objectives or goals* and *project results* in terms of optimum, sustained utilisation and patronage of project results. The approach adopted is to examine briefly:

a. how West African social structures operate;

b. the change process and its implications for specific types of communities at particular points in an increasingly decentralised system;

c. to propose a conceptual/analytical frame of reference or paradigm that helps understand, explain, predict and consequently helps to control and mitigate the resultant impact of diverse and sometimes divergent change activities on different categories and levels of social structures or communities and

d. to critically examine some problems of project implementation, particularly within the context of increasing focus on the realisation of policies of:

- *geo-political/administrative decentralisation,*

- *power to the people at all levels to the grass roots,*

- *national and community self-reliance and*

- *community participation and involvement in development activities destined for their use, upkeep, etc.*

Our primary focus is, therefore, to formulate and elaborate on a concept of **Change Orientation or Orientation to Change** as an analytical tool that can help **understand, explain** and **enhance** the prediction of, and **provide** for, the necessary mitigatory measures of the impact of change activities on different categories and levels of social structures or communities.

Change Orientation, in this context, is characterised by:

- *the type of impact intended by the initiator of a change activity, irrespective of his/her origin*
- **as well as** *the reactions of the social structures of the communities for which such an activity is intended or targeted.*

In this context, the analytical framework of *Change Orientation* is intended to be a useful and guiding frame of reference for:

- formulating, implementing and analysing/evaluating social development oriented activities and
- providing appropriate mitigating strategies for any unintended effects of such activities.

Shifts in focus of social development activities:

The failure of a number of development programmes and projects to achieve their objectives of *relevance, adoptability, acceptance* and *sustained utilisation* by beneficiary populations has always been an issue of much concern to governments, statesmen and researchers.

The shift to "**people centred development**" is an important one in the sense that it became increasingly evident that much of the failure of past development projects can be attributable to the almost total omission or neglect to focus such projects on human beings, living in groups (i.e., the human social factor and the principal actors in specified environments as well as the beneficiaries of such social development activities).

This shift to **people centred development** is of crucial importance in that it made it evidently clear that both the *initiator of a change activity and the beneficiary of such an activity* must necessarily act as partners and or collaborators in all relevant aspects of any such social development change activity. This approach necessarily shifted the emphasis in social development thinking and approach to **participatory development** at all levels down to the grass roots.

The usefulness of this thinking and approach to development planning is reinforced by the increasing universal endorsement and implementation of the concept of devolution of power and responsibility for planning to increasingly decentralised levels (from the national, regional to the lowest level). This, to a significant extent, reduced apathy at the local community level in terms of:

" we accept anything that is offered because we have no alternative or choice. "

It equally increased the level of consciousness that, in specific instances, it may become necessary (especially for governments and other executing agencies) to transfer or devolve part of the responsibility for development activities to lower geopolitical levels of decentralisation. In such situations, and in the light of the preceding discussion, it may be expedient to switch or impose change without the necessary involvement of the people or community concerned.

But in the light of our discussion and the proposed analytical frame of reference, such switching or imposing of change must be accompanied by corresponding effective and workable transitional mechanisms at various levels of decentralisation and devolution of power and responsibility to efficiently carry out development activities *specific and relevant* to these levels. At the same time it becomes necessary that institutions/ structures are created to operate within the general development framework of the country,

region or district while gradually making them adapt to local exigencies and conditions to alleviate fears, suspicions and encourage community patronage of changes and techniques introduced.

Participatory Development.

The concept and practice of participatory development, especially community participation in projects meant for their benefits, have inherent problems which, if not carefully identified and cautiously tackled, can reduce the effectiveness of *community participation in development* from a practical and useful concept to a mere **facade**. Participatory development implies the involvement of all parties concerned (beneficiaries and change agents/initiators) in the actual process of intervention activities. But the extent, nature and level of participation are significantly influenced by the type of intervention activity, especially how specialised or technical the activities concerned are.

In most cases, majority of the people resident at the local community level (mainly at the lower decentralised levels) lack the diverse modern competencies, skills and conceptual approaches to be fully and effectively involved (and absorbed if practicable) as equal partners or local counter parties in change activity implementation processes. Even if such competencies are available, some foreign funding or local executing agencies write into project budgets their own personnel for most key posts with **responsibility** and or **authority**.

Under such circumstances, local communities' views or perceptions (of problems for which specific changes are planned) are negated or relegated to minimal levels of participation such as provision of communal labour (such as sand, stone, water, block making, etc.) or employment at such low levels, ranging from daily rated labourers to semi-skilled or skilled artisans (carpenters, masons, tractor/ vehicle drivers, etc.). These participate but have little or no say or authority in the implementation process.

In the field of health, participation of non-trained health personnel is much more marginalised. On the other hand, in the provision of basic amenities, **community members** are usually just summoned to witness the inauguration of *boreholes*, *" gari"* manufacturing machines, etc., the *nature, type, design, suitability,* etc., on *which they took no effective part in deciding*.

Participatory development at all levels, but particularly at the local community level, must thus be understood in relation to:

- **how much capacity and or capacity building potentials** there are at the various community levels **and**
- the extent to which people at a particular level in a decentralised system are willing to, or can be made to be effectively involved and fully participate in change activities for which they are beneficiaries.

The preceding discussion also implies that different change activities **may** require from **slight** to **major** differences in approach at different community levels as well even at the same community level. This underscores the importance of effective communication at the same and at different levels. It implies that differences between levels of change activity (national, regional, district, sub-district, and community) are not necessarily hierarchical (*top to bottom*) but in reality, as it has become widely recognised, they differ and are usually hierarchical, horizontal or both.

Horizontally, at the community level, such communications become important factors in terms of receptivity, **achievement, social mobilization**, etc.. This is particularly so because at the community level, social structures are diffused, less rigid but nevertheless having a structured collectivity for purposes of mobilization, planning and action. Hence, the crucial importance of articulating community level horizontal communications with the change agent's higher level hierarchical communication in an efficient and effective information transmission system.

If community level horizontal and/or hierarchical communications are effectively articulated with a change agency's local level hierarchical communication, it becomes useful, even crucial in planning and in identifying relevant social, political, logistic, etc.. These factors are important for the community's eventual mobilization and commitment to, and involvement in, proposed or on-going change activities.

It is for the functionary of a change agency involved at a specific geo-political or administrative level to identify these local community considerations and effectively communicate them to project formulators for attention, thus bringing project formulators, local community conditions and factors closer together.

As simple as this may appear, it is indeed at this point that the process becomes problematic because:

a. the process for this **bottom-top** communication is normally rigid, narrow and bureaucratic;

b. it may not be complementary and/or mutually supportive and effectively organised in terms of resources (personnel, finance, materials, logistics, etc.,) for the expected response/action from above;

c. the bottom level does not have, most of the time, the **feeling of assurance, trust and confidence** to proceed without timely clearance from above. In the absence of mechanisms for efficient and timely clearance of communications and requests from below/lowest levels the results are, most of the time, **delays, frustrations and or inaction, etc.**, with their attendant consequences on the change activity-process.

It is a delicate situation at the lower levels (decreasing levels of decentralisation) when facilities and logistics are inadequate. It therefore requires prudence in embarking on certain types of activities if logistics are inadequate. This underscores the need for planners and implementers to adequately provide for decentralised units to be increasingly capacitated to deal with problems, issues and/or actions **specific** to their levels.

Change Orientations.

In the remote past, the old adage " *go to the people, observe them and learn from them* " was literally true and relevant to social development planning particularly in the case of people and communities increasingly remote from the **centre of** planning. At present, this saying is no more necessarily applicable, **in its literary sense. But the cardinal** principle that planners and project formulators should make conscious efforts to *consider, use* and *provide for relevant realities of local and community factors* in policy and project formulation *remains valid* and more *fundamental* to social planning *now* than *ever before*. More precisely, this principle makes it incumbent upon policy/ project planners and implementers to constantly bear in mind the ultimate interests, views and/or reactions (real or potential) of those likely to be directly affected by such policies and/or projects.

Under current conditions, it is hardly necessary for project or policy formulators to physically spend protracted periods of time in the field. Apart from enormous volumes of literature (ethnographic, situation analyses, feasibility studies, monthly, quarterly and annual reports) on a diversity of subjects and field situations provide serious project/policy planners with relevant documentation for **pre-project or policy formulation literature review**.

This is reinforced by the presence, in the field, of functionaries of most change agencies who are expected to be in constant touch with diverse facets of life and conditions of their assigned duty stations. Their reports, communications and observations constitute rich sources of knowledge and information on life and living conditions of areas of concern to project formulators and other social planners.

Judicious analysis, appraisal and collating of relevant data on the above information sources bring (increasingly and effectively through existing state of information technology) the relevant community factors and the context of the dynamics of planning targets to the desks, conference/ meeting rooms and personal computers of planners. The main issues and/or problems are that project formulators/planners **do not**, most of the time, make full and maximum use of these data source from the field which are intended to provide them with the operational contexts of proposed projects/plans.

A compounding factor is the thinking, by some social planners that communities constitute **subjects** of planning and/or projects and therefore must be made to necessarily change their *ways of doing and perceiving things* in accordance with project objectives. This particular view of a community as a **subject** of projects and must therefore be made to necessarily change in accordance to project objectives leads to a number of difficulties and errors. These views under-estimate the significant fact that not everything in a community's ways of life must be made to change. These views equally minimize the effects of traditional social structures on the **new ways and/or techniques** that are introduced.

The real fact is that in the process of change, a change agent may undergo change, being modified or changed entirely (if not eliminated). A clear example is that of Christianity in Latin American and African contexts.

The Analytical Frame of Reference of **Change Orientation/Orientation to change** seeks to address the above issues. It makes it explicit that:

a. Projects are not targeted to community members per se. They are targeted to **precisely identified conditions** in the living circumstances of communities, considered to constitute "**problems**" to which activities are meant to eradicate. They constitute **gaps or discrepancies** between the *prevailing living conditions and the expected* or *desired conditions* of life of a community.

b. These *project problems* **may or may** not be perceived by community members as such (as problems) because:

    i. If community members or a significant number of them **do not** perceive such identified conditions as **problems**, then it becomes necessary to find out **how** they perceive such conditions and what should be done to get them perceive such conditions as problems. This is not always an easy task.

    ii. If community members or a significant number of them also do identify and perceive conditions identified by project formulators as problems then an important obstacle is cleared. Hence the perception of a *condition* in a community as:

> constituting an obstacle or a problem or a gap
>
> *to* changing their prevailing conditions
>
> *from* the current state
>
> *to* what they would like and/or expect them to be,

constitutes a major precondition in mobilising community interest and involvement in a project.

c. Members of a community may perceive a condition as constituting a problem but may not attach the same importance to eradicate it as project formulators do. Community members merely recognising or acknowledging a condition as constituting a problem in their living conditions is, therefore, not enough. It is of crucial importance that they **also recognise** or be **made to recognise** and accept that appropriate activities must be embarked upon to eradicate the **problem creating condition**.

d. After consensus has been reached, it becomes necessary to discuss and/or analyse how members of the community currently go about or attempt to find solutions to the identified problem that is the target of a proposed project. This stage needs to be approached with caution and a clear perception of the total environment, the intricate community factors and the realities of the community situation.

e. Some of the currently adopted approaches by a community to solving any identified problem may be totally unacceptable under currently prevailing conditions and need to be completely changed.

f. The best answer is not condemnation of such practices **but** explanation, education and dialogue through effective communication to get the community to **understand** and **appreciate** the need for changes, agree and accept changes being proposed either as a whole or in a form modified by them.

g. The **rationale** in some of the methods currently adopted by a community in tackling a *project problem* may be acceptable but the practice might be **overtaken by events**. It is important to let the community know that its rationale for approaching such a problem is **acceptable and accepted** *but that there are alternative and more effective ways of achieving the same results*. These alternative methods have to be effectively explained, dialogued upon and realistic compromises, acceptable to all parties, arrived at. Such satisfactory compromises, understood and accepted by both community members and project formulators may be **any** or a **combination** of the following:

  a. Total rejection of prevailing practices and replacement by entirely new ones.

  b. Total **but** gradual replacement of prevailing practices but with provision made for "**social cost**" for the replacement when necessary and/or provision for gradual introduction of the new and equally gradual fading away of the old.

  c. Recognition and acceptance of positive aspects of current community approaches to the problem and **integrating** them into the new methods/approaches suggested. This implies **mutual recognition of the value of some community practices/ideas** and blending them with the **new**.

d. In view of variations in community conditions and community approaches to the same problem, a variety of approaches may be suggested collective as well as individual considerations of such factors as convenience, accessibility, affordability, etc.

e. A combination of (**a and b**); (**c and d**) or any of (**a-d**).

The above discussion recognises that:

i. Just as an initiator of change has a **perspective** from which he/she views the condition he/she intends changing and to which he/she targets his/her change activities, *so also do* members of a community experiencing an identified *project problem condition* also **have their own perspective and orientation** to such a problem condition.

ii. A community's reactions to activities targeted to change specific circumstances in its living conditions depend upon, and are determined by, their **own perception** (*as contrasted with that of the change initiator*) of the project target condition and the **current approach** to finding a solution to it.

iii. Change activities are reacted to differently *not according to the change initiator's objective of the change activity but rather from a community's perception of the targeted condition, the perceived effects compared with their own current approaches to the targeted condition.*

iv. Some categories of change activities (depending on their nature) are perceived as more beneficial by community members than others and are therefore more acceptable to them than others.

v. The criteria for community **positive** or **negative** reactions to specific categories of change activities are the community's **own** perception of the nature, consequence and benefit/adverse effect of a specific category of change activity.

vi. A change initiator should therefore approach a change activity-formulation from a *careful and cautious articulation and reconciliation of:*

what the change activity is intended to achieve,

with how the community experiencing the targeted condition perceives such a condition(s),

how the community currently deals with it and

therefore, how the targeted activity is likely to be perceived and reacted to.

On the basis of the above considerations, the *Change Orientation Analytical Frame of Reference* identifies 4 categories of *change orientations* or a combination of them. These are intended to provide as basis for formulation, initiation, implementation and reviewing of projects by change agents to ensure maximum acceptance, sustained use and patronage.

Project Implementation.

The main social development problem in Ghana is *essentially not that of lack of projects or policies but rather that of ineffective project/policy implementation.* In this context, after presenting the Analytical Frame of Reference of Change Orientation, the rest of the document then addresses some crucial aspects of project implementation, particularly in Ghana.

Much importance has been given to project implementation because it is our view that *while a badly formulated project may be rescued and resuscitated by effective and efficient implementation, a well formulated policy badly implemented hardly yields expected results but rather disaster, agony, frustration, etc.*

The efforts in this document therefore address both project formulation and project implementation. It is hoped that the effective understanding and use of the analytical Frame of Reference of Change Orientation will help improve project formulation within the context of increasingly decentralisation of planning.

The analysis on project implementation will improve the quality of service delivered by the various organisations, agencies and individuals, *to* communities at various levels of the geo-politico-administrative decentralised system.

The discussion provides a cogent frame for the analysis of a wide range of development problems confronting social planners and programme managers/implementers.

The analytical approach addresses community interaction problems that particularly concern the new cadre of field personnel constituting the management teams at the decentralised levels of management and administration. This cadre of project managers at the different decentralised levels mostly operate as agents of larger parent organisations. They often face a number of the problems and difficulties raised in this document.

The application of the Analytical Frame of Reference of Change Orientation to specific categories of field-level problems of programme/project implementation is intended to improve upon the power of prediction and to enhance the intended and/or expected outcome of projects.

CHAPTER TWO.
COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE AGENTS.

After carefully considering the available literature relevant to field-level personnel on Community Mobilization and Management of Change Agents, we have decided to approach the discussion from a slightly different perspective. This is with a view to addressing some actual field problems and issues with specific emphasis on *development-oriented* activities.

Although community mobilization is important, we shall not dwell on it at this point in our discussion since it is a function of the extent to which the change initiator has been able to:

a.   *effectively carry out community diagnosis and identify community problems and*

b.   *arouse the interest and commitment of members of the community concerning what to do about such identified problems.*

Discussions, especially those on projects and programmes such as the Primary Health Care, normally highlight how complex the implementation of a project at the field level is. For example the Primary Health Care Programme has at least eight (8) main different packages or components rallying around different specialisations, expertise and ministerial departments and organisations. This draws attention to the crucial importance of *coordination* that in turn underscores the fundamental fact that *neither the individual nor the community to which change activities are ultimately directed should be considered as atomised. Being **holistic and composite** units they should be approached as a whole.* This therefore requires a *frontal attack* in initiating any activity intended to benefit a community and/or its members collectively or individually. Hence the relevance for the change initiator to understand community structure and organisation since these are the fabric upon which to build change activities.

> *One can not change anything in a vacuum.*
>
> *One initiates changes into an existing community,*
>
> *made up of individuals,*
>
> *residing in a specified environment for varying lengths of time.*

We have, therefore, chosen to discuss and draw attention to key concepts on the topic and their implications for the theme under discussion. In our search to evolve more effective and more meaningful ways of getting the people in our countries to improve upon their living conditions, especially in the face of:

> *a galloping population growth,*
>
> *a critical economic condition and*
>
> *an increasingly worsening environmental and climatic conditions,*

a number of different approaches to effect changes in various social systems have been embarked upon with varying degrees of success as well as of failure. Currently, and at different times in the past, different approaches to promote the enhancement of the living conditions of our people, especially in rural communities, have been adopted. Based on these, we shall address the following concepts within the context of our discussion. We shall draw on examples mainly from Integrated Community Development Projects for purposes of illustration. To this end, we shall briefly draw attention to fundamental factors implied in the following concepts.

Community.

Change Agent.

Management of Change Agents and

Mobilization for Community Activity.

COMMUNITY.

Basic to any idea or attempt at discussing projects aimed at improving living conditions, is the notion or concept of a people or a community who, in the final analysis, are the ultimate beneficiaries or ultimate victims of such projects. The idea of a community brings to mind:

a group of people,

related in various ways,

living in a defined geographical area;

for a considerable amount of time.

The geographical dimension of a community directs attention to a series of conditions such as the environment, climate, habitat, economy, resources, (surface and underground) the dangers and risks that are associated with living under such conditions and exploiting resources therefrom.

A community cannot therefore be discussed in isolation from its geo-physical context. The fact that a people have lived in a specific geographical area for a protracted amount of time points to the importance of the *temporal dimension of a community*. Protracted residence in an area implies getting used to the area, developing means of coping with, mastering, exploiting and modifying such an environment. This leads to the development of cooperative links and commonly accepted means of dealing with recurring problems of the area.

This in turn gives rise to common practices, traditions, and ways of thinking, ways of perceiving, understanding and explaining events and ways of defining relationships with fellow members of the community as well as with outsiders.

The individual thus has a defined frame of reference to guide him and to provide him with a *charter* that he has to refer to as a defining principle in different social situations. But these situations change with changing perceptions, changing attitudes as well as changing technology. They become lasting parts and parcels not only the people but also of the environment.

This we may refer to as **custom and tradition**;

the *trodden path* which has been followed

by those who lived there earlier.

Those who handed them down,

as a guide to be followed and cherished

by future generations, who may add to,

but may not discredit or compromise it.

This makes it possible for succeeding generations to *review, modify, add to, or alter completely* (although most of the time gradually) what has been bequeathed to them.

Individuals are thus able to initiate and introduce new ways of doing things and develop new perceptions of the environment (both social and physical) into the existing customs and traditions. This process allows custom and tradition to change **but** *cautiously and selectively*.

Members of a community usually keep to a custom or a tradition unaltered. Unless something more effective, and/or more acceptable is offered as an alternative, it becomes very difficult for a people to do away with their customs and traditions. We must however emphasize that it is important that custom and tradition usually are *conservative* so as to **retain** the *permanent, recurrent and acceptable* things that exist in the system whereas this *very conservatism* can constitute a formidable obstruction to change, the introduction of innovation and social and economic transformation. From this perspective, tradition becomes the defining principle and authority sanctioning behaviour for rewards, prestige, authority and power in a specified community. We can therefore understand why people may *stick hard* to their customs and traditions and may **only** do away with them *reluctantly and slowly*. In fact, it is this conservatism in custom and tradition that keeps communities as organised ongoing systems at least for a specified time.

On the other hand, if the same customs and traditions are perceived as an ever increasing effort of a community to devise means for a more effective mastery over its environment, they can be viewed as aspects of culture, (i.e., what has been learnt, achieved, acquired and transmitted over the years) as well as the **peculiar and particular** ways of perceiving and doing things.

But this other side of the *coin of tradition*, as an aspect of culture is *dynamic* in that it allows for innovation, modification and transformation. It selectively **absorbs** what is acceptable and adapts to it but rejects and/or resists the unacceptable.

This leads to an "evolutionary interplay of tradition and change the process of selective adaptation" which characterises a community's history and provides "a distant mirror reflecting the constant dialogue among tradition, continuity, discovery and change that shapes the ever changing nature" of a community. The initiator of change into a community can not, therefore, disregard the environment in which the people live, think and perceive things. Even if these appear irrational, it is incumbent upon the change initiator to understand and appreciate the rationale for a people's arguments concerning specific beliefs and or practices. It is only when this is done that one can have cogent counter-arguments to convince and *win over* community members to consider change-oriented discussions and activities. Hence the importance for the change initiator to understand the context in which a community operates. It is equally important not to underestimate or underrate the intelligence of people in a community but rather to understand and

appreciate why they do specific things in specific ways at specific occasions.

The community, which is the fabric upon which change activities are built, is made up of individuals residing in an environment for a substantial amount of time and whose cumulative efforts and experiences in such an environment have blended the people and the environment into an identifiable entity-culture. No matter how irrational this culture might appear to the outsider, it must, under no condition, be treated as superstitions, not worth the time or patience, understanding and appreciation of the change initiator. In fact, it is the very conservative elements in tradition, those seemingly absurd and illogical elements in a community's culture which keep the community going and provide its members with their identity, that *SELF* they respect and are so proud of. These cultural elements can be highly changeable and adaptable to changing circumstances since every human community aspires not only for survival but also for better and more congenial living conditions, primarily through its culture. Hence culture can be dynamic and susceptible to change, i.e., culture can be, and indeed is, **changeable**.

Certain aspects of culture, particularly customs and tradition, however, can be conservative. It is this changeability of culture that makes for the possibility of introducing changes, improvements, better and healthier conditions into a community. It is this that provides what Wilbert Moore designates as **Tension Management, Safety Valve Mechanisms and Institutional Provisions** which help accommodate, diffuse, contain or manage change activities. If properly understood, when its mechanisms of operation and tension management are effectively articulated with planned change activities, the cultural complex of a community can be made more receptive to change. It can become a **vehicle** for pushing through, as it can be obstructive to, change projects, if its operating mechanisms are misunderstood, misinterpreted and their *built in* force and authority underestimated.

CHAPTER THREE.
THE CONCEPT OF CHANGE AND CHANGE ORIENTATION.

Change.

Let us turn to the concept of **change** itself because the topic presupposes that **field personnel** are in fact change agents and that they deal with **change** activities in their respective Ministries, Departments or Organisations. For example, the **Nutrition, Parasite Control and Family Planning** project which aims at eradicating parasitic infestation in selected communities in Ghana by the use of modern deworming medication as well as improving the nutritional and health conditions of people in the project areas, is an intervention activity in the process of introducing **change** (*transformations*) into the particular communities in which this project operates.

The way the activities of this project are introduced and implemented can, and are likely to, affect the reaction of the people in the particular communities into which the change activities are introduced. We shall therefore envisage **change** as an intervention activity or a series of such activities in the process of introducing transformations into a particular community.

Although we have all along been referring to **change**, it is important, at this point, to underscore the following facts:

a. *that there are different types of change;*

b. *as well as different levels and directions of change;*

c. *that the nature of change, the way and manner it is introduced and*

d. *its probable or likely effects as perceived by the sources of the change,*

can, and do, influence and affect the reaction of the people (the target of the change) in the community into which change activities are introduced.

The Concept of Change Orientation.

Organised or planned change of any kind has a *direction* and an *impact* on the communities or social structures to which such an activity is focused at (specific geopolitical levels). Organised or planned change should therefore be so oriented and so directed as to have specific effects on the communities/ social structures, etc., of the particular change and therefore have *predetermined impacts on, and reactions from, the target communities or social structures*. It is these predetermined impacts on, and reactions from, the object of change that *constitute the objective of change activities in particular instances that we refer to as Change Orientation.*

It is the type of impact and reactions the initiators of a change activity aim at, expect, and to which they organise and direct their operations and resources through the implementation of specific programmes

or projects. It is, and should be, the carefully pondered over and well-understood **end result** expected by the initiator of a change process.

The concept of change orientation characterises the type of impact intended and reactions expected. It equally serves as a guide for predicting the type of impact a set of specific change oriented activities are *expected to have* on specified social structures or communities *of specified* characteristics. Hence for development activities to be effective and sustainable, *they should have specific and clearly defined change orientations, depending upon the nature of the change and the type of community structures expected to undergo the expected changes*.

The concept of change orientation is therefore a *useful tool* and *guide* for an initiator of a development-oriented change to predict, monitor and evaluate the impacts of, and reactions to, specific change activities on different types of communities. It is therefore necessary for change initiators to have precise ideas of *the orientation* of the change activities they initiate.

Initiation of change may be classified into the following **4** categories of **Change Orientations** or a combination of them.

1. *The Switch or Transformation Change Orientation,*

2. *The Alteration Transitional Change Orientation,*

3. *The Reciprocity Change Orientation,*

4. *The Conversion or Variety Change Orientation.*

1. The Switch or Transformation Change Orientation aims at changes that have the effect of:

 a. switching the community structure or an object of change completely away *from*,

 b. or to *abandon*, existing conditions, practices, methods, techniques or ways of thinking about, and perceiving, things to which a people are used (and which they may be emotionally attached);

 c. *to* entirely **completely different or new** systems, methods, techniques or ways of perceiving things or thought systems.

This type of change is radical and often results in changes in the *external form*, in the *content*, in the *appearance*, in the *character* and even in the *function* of the different elements of the social structure of the community concerned or the target of such a change activity.

The Government's Decentralisation Policy and the creation of District Assemblies which radically changed the geo-politico-administrative structure and the Local Government system in Ghana, is an example of this category of change activity.

2. **The Alteration Transitional Change Orientation** aims at changes **from** one **state** to **another** through an initial adjustment to a **transitional stage**.

> This category of change orientation is similar to that of the Switch or Transformation Change Orientation, **but** is relatively less radical and less severe.
>
> The ultimate objective is to **completely replace or alter** a current system by an *entirely new system, different in form* from its original **but** the *replacement* is not abrupt or automatic. There is an **adjustment** period during which the two(2) systems co-exist while at the same time gradually phasing out the old system until the new system is firmly established and the old one is phased out.
>
> The introduction of the Junior (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) system to replace the existing educational system in Ghana is an example of this category of change orientation. The ultimate objective is to completely replace the existing educational system by the JSS and SSS systems. But the replacement is not **abrupt** or **automatic**. There is a **transitional** period when the two systems co-exist while at the same time gradually phasing out the old system until the new educational system (JSS and SSS) is firmly established and the old system completely phased out. The cumulative process in this transformation includes **new elements or outputs** which may require inputs which may not be readily available at the localised level.

3. **The Reciprocity Change Orientation** aims at changes that *involve reciprocity elements of indirect interchange, replacement or exchange of one element (structure) or a category of elements for another, mainly or seemingly the same or of identical category.*

> The rationale for this Change Orientation is that the target of change has something worth keeping or preserving while at the same time recognising the **need** or **room** for new elements. The inherent reciprocity elements in this approach make it appealing and less repulsive to the target of change because of a **mutual consideration and respect** by both the object and the initiator of the change.
>
> What the reciprocity orientation offers may be in **a different form** from the original situation, condition or practice. For example, the modern MCH/FP clinic-based antenatal and postnatal services and facilities take a different form from traditional maternity practices and services. The MCH/FP offers an alternative means (modern clinic-based antenatal and postnatal services and facilities) of achieving the same objective, **but shifts** the circumstances or conditions that make the difference, i.e., a **shift** from traditional, home-based maternity services of traditional mid-wives (TMWs) to modern clinic-based, supervised delivery services to achieve the same objective more effectively by **entirely different methods.**
>
> Another example of the **Reciprocity Change Orientation** is the **Integrated Parasite Control, Nutrition and Family Planning Project** which promotes strong, healthy and well-spaced children. But, instead of traditional birth spacing practices, the project offers modern contraceptive and family planning services or facilities which are different but are more effective methods of birth spacing and regulating fertility. The project is not discrediting what the people practice. It rather offers an alternative or a variety of alternative methods (such as a nutritional package and modern family planning and contraceptive methods and facilities) of

achieving the same objectives but **shifts the circumstances or conditions** that make the difference, i.e., a shift from traditional birth spacing, to modern contraceptive methods. This achieves the same goal more effectively by **entirely different means.** At the same time it ensures the nutritional status of mothers and children through effective and relevant nutrition education and the provision of food supplements, vitamins, etc.

4. *The Conversion or Variety Change Orientation* aims at *changes designed to adapt existing systems, practices and/or beliefs to new use or to different conditions and/or changes designed to exchange existing structures, systems or practices for another of an equivalent or better value. In this case what is offered may be in the same form.*

An example is the integrated Parasite Control, Nutrition and Family Planning Project in selected areas of Ghana.

Parasite infestation, especially guinea worm and various intestinal parasite infestation, was identified as a serious problem in specified areas in Ghana. Although there are various local medication for worm infestation (such as herbs, infusions etc., which may not be specific to intestinal parasites or which may even exacerbate the conditions being treated) they are not effective enough in dealing with the incidence and health effects of the disease. An Integrated project was formulated to use modern deworming medication in combination with an improved nutrition package and family planning services to prompt the affected areas and involving them in eradicating the disease and improving upon their health status by adopting the project's new methods of deworming reinforced with a nutrition package and family planning services.

The objective remained the **same** for the communities concerned and the project organisers, i.e., medication for eradication of parasite infestation and thus improving upon the health status of the people in the project area. However, the form of medication changes **from** traditional pharmacopoeia **to** modern deworming medication with nutrition and family planning packages to improve the health status of the community. To achieve this, an attempt is made to educate the people and convert them by offering them something else, something more effective **(but similar to what they have been using)** - modern deworming medication in addition to improved nutrition packages, vitamins and family planning services. Besides the project encourages the use of clean and potable water, especially, by the introduction of pipe borne water or bore holes to help replace the use of river water, polluted stagnated water, etc. If the project beneficiaries find that the project's methods of deworming and the attendant health promoting activities are more potent than the traditional method of deworming, there is a greater prospect for them to accept the project's offer because:

-**What is offered takes the same form - deworming medication;**

-as what was formerly used - **traditional deworming medication;**

- which is less potent than the new form of medication supplemented by improved nutrition packages and potable pipe borne and borehole water provided by project activities.

The most important difference is that one *form* of medication:

- **modern deworming medication**;

- is more effective than the other *form;*

- **traditional deworming medication**.

Another example is Nubility/Puberty rites, which are important in introducing the young girl at menarche into womanhood as well as constituting a period of intensive initiation of the young girl into her future roles of motherhood, wifehood, parenthood and other female-specific roles. At the same time, the school curriculum in particular does not adequately provide for the instruction in management of menarche, motherhood and adult female specific roles. An increasing number of girls are, thus, experiencing menarche at an earlier age, inadequately prepared for the associated problems and responsibilities of postmenarche.

The reciprocity orientation of change recognises:

- elements in the traditional puberty rites which, when properly identified and embodied in the school system, will supplement and reinforce current trends of retaining girls in school or in training programmes for increasingly longer periods.

-On the other hand the puberty rites themselves can be modernised, especially those aspects, which have been overtaken by current changes and technology such as the traditional religious practices, incorporated in the rites.

-The period would not only be shortened but also timed to coincide with school vacation periods.

-Time-table provision in schools could be made for knowledgeable, experienced, elderly women to be brought in to teach in the schools, what they transmit to initiates during puberty rites.

In the process, puberty rites will be modernised by getting rid of what have been over taken by time. At the same time, the increasing number of girls enrolled in the formal school system can continue school yet benefit from the relevant aspects of education in puberty rites without feeling ashamed of undergoing rites which may be considered unchristian or outmoded.

The reciprocity element in this type of change process is the mutual recognition of the benefits and weaknesses of each system instead of condemning puberty rites without considering their useful educational and training aspects.

Any change process should therefore be **seen or perceived** by both the change initiator and the target of the change activity to **offer something new, some thing different** to the target of a change activity.

What is being offered through any project or programme activities or process may be *conceived* (by either the change initiator or the target of change or by both) in two possible ways or at **two different levels**:

a.   At the level of the change initiator; i.e., from the change initiator's orientation.

b.   At the level of the target of change, i.e., from the orientation of the target of change or from the point of view of what the target of change expects from a particular change activity.

A change process must therefore be so oriented and so articulated with the existing social conditions as to offer the target of a change activity the chance to judge and decide for themselves:

    i. *superiority of the new system, idea, technique in comparison with the existing one;*

    ii. *convenience of use;*

    iii. *cost/affordability;*

    iv. *accessibility; (social, physical, psychological);*

    v. *trialbility ;*

    vi. *ease of manipulation;*

    vii. *safety of use;*

    viii. *maintenance, repair and replacement possibilities and facilities.*

These are the criteria that individuals and communities weigh when deciding to accept or reject, to utilise or not to utilise, a new method. a new facility or a new technology. The change initiator therefore has the responsibility to weigh **what** is being proposed and offered against criteria **(i-viii)** above. This implies that a change activity must be so oriented as to offer the targets of such a change activity the opportunity to judge for themselves **how superior** what is being offered **is compared with** what is available to which they are used to and **how accessible** the **new** is.

    a.   *The new offer may be superior to the existing one but accessibility to it may be difficult.*

    b.   *The new may be technically more efficient to use but may not be convenient or easy to manipulate.*

    c.   *There may not be adequate maintenance, repair and replacement facilities to ensure continued and sustained use.*

These are the factors that go into a community's decisions to accept, adapt or reject new methods, new ideas or new technologies. If these factors/conditions are not perceived and proven to be satisfactory, the new offer is likely to be rejected. The question that keeps on recurring is:

    " if we are losing all these,

    what *are we being offered in exchange and*

    how *worthwhile is it ?. "*

The change initiator must therefore use the criteria **i - viii,** discussed earlier, in weighing what is being offered **compared** with what is already available, to which people are already familiar with. The new can then be introduced with a higher likelihood that it will not only be accepted. but used and its use sustained.

The Switch or Transformation Change Orientation **and** *the Alteration Transitional Change Orientation* both result in radical and far reaching changes in existing structures. They both usually become *points of historical reference at the national, district, community* levels.

For instance, the implementation of the Decentralization and the District Assemblies Policies of the Government of Ghana (1989) did not only introduce radical changes in the history of Local Government in Ghana. They also became a turning point in the geo-political history of Ghana.

The Switch or Transformation Change Orientation requires considerable amounts of resources (material, financial, political, etc.) and powerful, effective mechanisms to succeed as demonstrated in cases of the Ghana Government's

i.   Decentralised Policy (1989).

ii.   The changes in the Ghana Educational System to JSS/SSS systems as discussed earlier and

iii.   The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP, 1987).

The Switch Transformation Change Orientation is therefore normally embarked upon by powerful political regimes of the authoritarian type or by regimes with absolute majority in Parliament or by military regimes which rule by decrees. This is mainly because, apart from the substantial amount of resources needed the, *power and authority to effectively enforce implementation* is vitally critical to the success of such radical changes.

On the other hand, the *Alteration Transitional Change Orientation,* though radical, allows for a **transitional** period to make room for **adjustments**, modifications or revisions in the new changes introduced. If the transitional period is however not effectively and objectively handled, or if it is ill prepared, the consequences can be disastrously serious indeed for the target of any such a change activity. An example of this category of change orientation is the **damming** of the Volta River at Akosombo. The dam, when completed, formed a lake of over 250 miles (400 kms.) long, inundating vast areas of inhabited land.

As a *transitional provision*, a resettlement project of inhabitants in 52 model townships was envisaged to evacuate the inhabitants of the affected areas and their properties before the final inundation of the lake basin.

The resettlement programme, i.e., **the transition**, did not however operate as scheduled. Then came the torrential rains earlier than expected, resulting in damage to human and animal life as well as to property. This compelled the Volta River Authority to adapt a crash resettlement scheme which left its indelible marks on the resettled populations and the catchment areas above and below the dam.

The above discussion introduced four **(4)** different categories of Change Orientations. For a particular community concerned and depending on the following:

a.   *the circumstances*: time and place ;

b.   *the prevailing conditions*: social, economic, financial and political;

c.   *the structures involved* : systems, organisations, institutions;

d.   *the over-all governmental development policies* : plans, strategies, legislation, etc.,

A change initiator must, carefully and critically **but** objectively, consider and decide on which **one** or which **combinations of modifications** may be most appropriate in that particular situation and therefore likely to have:

i.   *maximum* acceptance;

ii.   *easier* affordability and access;

iii. greater sustained use/utilisation and

iv. *least* resistance, objection and inconveniences to, or from, all categories concerned.

The Concept of Change Orientation and the Nature of the Change Process.

Organised or planned change of any kind takes time to yield results. This temporal dimension of change which makes the change itself a process during which **substitutions, alterations, modifications and transformations** take place in conditions of living of individuals and communities, *is* a very sensitive and delicate endeavour. It must therefore not be embarked upon without careful analysis and effective dialogue on the issues involved with individuals and communities likely to be affected. Evaluation therefore becomes very important and necessary because of unanticipated effects of purposive social action.

It should be stressed that the temporal dimension which makes change itself a process, provides opportunities to modify or rectify what is being introduced, especially when faults, mis-judgments/ errors are detected or people's sensitivities are aroused.

The concept of change orientation equally provides the possibility of withdrawing or replacing elements which were thought at the planning stage to work but which did not work at the implementation stage. This in fact rules out embarking upon a change process with an **error-free attitude**, but rather with the full awareness that acceptance and sustained use of changes introduced can be achieved by full involvement and participation of communities concerned.

This involvement and participation of target communities in change activities destined to benefit them should not be limited only to the inception of the identification of activities. Such participation and active involvement must be sustained throughout the different stages in the project activity implementation process.

On the other hand, this approach to the provision of social development services and facilities makes room for constant review and monitoring of what was planned or programmed **compared** with the realities of the change situation, especially as more knowledge is gained from the local situation. Hence a more complete and more meaningful review and/or re-mapping of the *course* of the change activity can be effected.

CHAPTER FOUR.
THE CHANGE AGENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The Change Agent.

A change Agent is generally conceived as an individual, a group or an organisation, acting or having the authority or disposing of the know-how, or specialised skill, or organisational ability, or funds, or time or a combination of these to embark upon a change activity, a project or a programme, ideally with full cooperation participation and involvement of the communities (target of change concerned).

Change Agents can be classified at three different levels, from within or outside the community - individuals with vision, Town Development Committees - and local associations such as; Women's groups, Youth groups, Churches, etc.. It is erroneous to think that Change Agents always come from outside the community. They can emanate from within the local community. We may therefore classify Change Agents under the following categories:

1. An individual or group of individuals from the same community, recognising the need for specified changes in the conditions of their community may either:

   a. not have the means or resources to initiate a conceived or proposed change actions and may therefore appeal to a government agency, to a local NGO or to an organisation outside the country for assistance in intervention activities, ideally in consultation with, and full involvement of the communities (target of change) concerned.

   b. or may have the means or the authority to raise resources, community cooperation and involvement to effect the desired change. In fact the present policy of the Decentralisation and Self-reliance policies of the Ghana government is, through the District Assemblies, to encourage local change agents to take an increasingly more active part in the development of their own communities.

   c. The Policy of Self-Reliance demands that District Assemblies should identify possible exploitable resources and formulate fundable projects for their full exploitation. Such identified District and/or community-level projects are to be submitted for consideration by funding agencies and NGOs to help exploit such resources which the District Assemblies are expected to be actively involved and effectively participate in implementing.

2. A Government Department having mandate to effect such changes at decreasing levels of decentralised units.

3. An NGO interested in, or invited to finance, such a change activity. Change Agents of categories 2 and 3 above always employ *intermediaries* under clearly defined conditions to carry out, ideally, the necessary change activities with the collaboration and cooperation of the local community concerned.

Since Governments alone cannot effectively cope with the immensely diversified tasks of developing their countries, there is increasing resort to, and reliance on, NGOs and other development-oriented funding agencies to provide financial, material, logistic, etc., assistance at the necessary stages in identified programmes in developing countries.

The Change Agent and Community Relationships.

An organised or planned change of any kind does not take place in a vacuum. It takes place within specific contexts. In the context of social development, the unit of **change** is the *individual, the community or the society* within specified geographical, social and cultural settings.

A community lives under, and experiences, specified living conditions.

At any particular point in time, there are a number of **factors operating** within different areas of the community, the sum total of which constitutes the **current living conditions** being experienced by the community.

In addition, members of the community have *aspirations and expectations* from their environmental conditions.

In most cases, majority of the **operating conditions** do not meet the expectations of the people.

Efforts are normally not commensurate with results. There is therefore normally always a discrepancy between the *current living conditions* of a community and the *aspired or desired conditions* members of the community would like to have.

This *discrepancy* between the *existing current living conditions* experienced by members of a community and their *aspirations constitutes a gap between the real living conditions and the desired conditions.*

This **GAP** constitutes what we define as a ***PROBLEM***, as illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1.

A	P	B
current/existing living conditions experienced by a community.	**GAP**	Desired /aspired living conditions of the community
	Discrepancy Frustration Discontent	
	PROBLEM	

The **extent** or **gravity** of a *PROBLEM* depends upon **how wide** or **how narrow** the *gap* is.

The most important thing to note on a *problem* in this context is that normally there are a number of factors operating or whose combined operating effects constitute this problem. To *reduce*, *narrow* or *close* the **gap**, these **operating factors** have to be identified and suitable and effective action taken to eliminate them or minimise their effects as much as possible. Let us take the example of the Parasite

Control, Nutrition and Family Planning project as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

A	P	B
EXISTING CONDITIONS	**GAP**	**DESIRED CONDITIONS**
a. 90% of children and 70% of adults are worm - infested.	**ACTION** **PROJECT**	**a.** Worm infestation among children to be reduced to 10% and that of adults to 5%
b. 70% of children are malnourished.	**IDENTIFICATION**	**b.** Malnutrition among children to be reduced to 5%.
c. 50% of teenage girls become pregnant before completing school or any training.	**PROJECT DOCUMENT** **FINDING** **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION** **PROJECT CYCLE** **PROJECT TERMINATION**	**c.** 90% of girls to complete school and not to experience pregnancy during the training programme.

It is in the area of problem identification and project formulation that *Community Change Agent relationship* becomes important and in fact crucial to the resolution of the problem identified. It is at this stage that our introductory discussion on community structure and organisation becomes relevant to a meaningful understanding of identified problems and the formulation of realistic projects that can provide the needed results to bridge, close or at least narrow the gap:

*between **efforts** and **results**;*

*between **real** and **aspired situations** and*

*between the **real** and **expected conditions**.*

It is in this context that a clear understanding of such factors as:

the geography;

the environmental conditions;

the social institutional system;

the traditional hierarchy;

the stratification and

the traditional reward systems;

and above all, the people's conception of their environment and their religious beliefs and practices, are pertinently crucial to the actions and activities of change agents. In the example of the Integrated Parasite, Nutrition and Family planning project cited earlier, it is necessary to contact and discuss with community members concerning:

what their level of awareness and conception of worm infestation is;

what they do about it;

how effective what they do about worm infestation is and

whether they perceive worm infestation as constituting a problem they should eradicate.

This provides an opportunity for the change agent to discuss modern methods of worm treatment with members/opinion leaders of the community. At this point, the community and the change agent are brought together for a **common goal or objective** - *to eradicate worm infestation from the community*.

The community members have been using their own methods with results thus far achieved. The change agent now has the opportunity to explain and suggest his/her alternative way of deworming to them. It is incumbent upon change agents to expound and elucidate:

what is involved in the new;

the dangers of worm infestation and

the advantages to be derived

at the individual as well as at the community levels from the new method of deworming. It is necessary to get it across clearly to the community members that the only magic formula for success is the community's own *commitment, involvement* and their own *contribution* and *cooperation* with whatever assistance might be provided them.

CHAPTER FIVE.
THE CHANGE AGENT AND COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

Community mobilisation implies rallying together members of a community and harnessing their cooperation, collaboration, involvement and a commitment for a common goal or to fight against a common enemy. In social developmental activities, this can be effectively achieved by recognised community leaders or by outside change agents operating through recognised *traditional community communication, leadership and authority systems*, bearing in mind the following:-

1. Identification of common interest and agreement on common objectives to resolve issues considered by both the community and the change agent as of paramount importance in any attempt at mobilizing communal co-operation and support for an intended change activity.

   In fact this strategy has the same common element and approach adopted in international diplomatic conflict resolution between nations with different views and/or original orientation /approaches to a common issue or crisis situation.

2. It is not enough/sufficient to secure the agreement in principle from prospective beneficiaries of a change activity but ensure that a sound basis for commitment is established. This basis can be economic, financial, social or a combination of these.

3. During reviews and discussion sessions the advantages, inconveniences and shortcomings of both the traditionally utilised methods and the new ones being proposed or advocated, should be simply but objectively identified.

   A consensus must be reached on common, accepted objectives and decisions taken by the two parties (community leaders and the change agent) on the goals to be attained, with the type and level of contribution participation and involvement expected from each party clearly specified, explained and well understood by all parties involved.

4. There is the danger (but a common practice by public servants, government agents and representatives of funding agencies) that, once a problem is identified and the consent of the community to find ways to resolve it have been obtained, *community change agent* negotiations and consultations cease.

5. The change agent withdraws to the office, works out the proposed change activities within his or her organisational framework and returns to the community with a formulated activity-package/packages which may or may not necessarily take into consideration the community members' views.

   a. Examples abound of instances of NGOs or Government representatives and community representatives agreeing on the need to provide a community with such public amenities as a market, a latrine, etc.. This may be the result of the realisation by both the NGO / Government agency and the community concerned that such an amenity is necessary, is needed and is in the interest of the community.

   b. Agents of NGOs funding Agencies or the Government (but currently gradually decreasing) are tempted to assume that such an acceptance in principle constitutes a *fait accompli*.

They often unilaterally go ahead to formulate, budget and implement such projects without further consultation and involvement of the community members or their representatives except where there is need for their services such as communal labour.

c. In most such cases, the final formulation of the project may deviate considerably from what was agreed upon with the community leadership. Even the siting of some such projects may be altered altogether without resort to the community concerned.

The result is that a number of such completed projects as markets, K.V.I.Ps, (Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pits) are completed but are either boycotted by community members because they are not suitable or are not adapted for their use.

There are a number of KVIPs constructed for *toilet roll-use* where villagers don't have or can not afford toilet rolls. They therefore use other materials not suitable for the system which therefore quickly clog the KIVPs.

Some markets are hardly ever used due to their siting. On the contrary community members continue using or practicing what they were used to before the project activity.

d. KVIPs are found in a number of coastal towns of the Central Region of Ghana which were boycotted by the inhabitants. The situation compelled the then Regional Chief Executive of the Region to visit the towns and address the people with the expectation of convincing them to use the KVIPs.

Despite the efforts and explanation of the highest-ranking political authority in the Region, the people simply rebuffed with a proverbial reply that:

"we have heard all that you have said but we have refused to understand."

This statement implied a rejection, in no uncertain terms, of the use of the new "technology".

It also suggests that future such endeavours without due articulation of certain basic elements/ conditions in community members' current practice with the new projects, are likely not to be used or misused, abused, abandoned or not patronised or under-utilised.

6. No matter how well intended such propositions/packages of proposed activities are, they are likely to be resisted by local people or at best they may receive a lukewarm attitude, especially if they emanate from a government departmental source. Community interest and co-operation are likely to be at best marginal.

7. Change agents/organisations should avoid working in isolation from community representatives but rather make it a mandatory first step to involve community participation, *right from the inception of any change activities*, working together on all stages, taking joint (if only compromised) decisions on identification of tasks involved and possible *solutions*.

8. Community members are flattered if their participation is solicited (if even nominally) in decisions relating to what *tasks* can best be carried out by the community itself and which, by the change-sponsoring organisation.

9. It is equally necessary to involve the community in all discussions, decisions, assessments and

identification of members' contribution and time relating to a change act activity requiring maximum commitment from a community.

10. Mutual confidence is re-enforced if the change organisation is seen to take all necessary measures to ensure that its part of the *deal* is fulfilled on schedule.

Assignment/Specification of Local Functionaries' Roles/Tasks.

In the implementation stage of a change activity it is of crucial importance to consider and decide to assign some leading roles to traditional functionaries, taking into consideration their capability, leadership role and the objective of the activities. This factor, if accompanied by the appropriate actions, decisions and behaviour orientation of the initiating organisation, should contribute to make the community identify itself *right from the beginning* with proposed/ongoing change activities as its **own**. In which its members took part to initiate, in which they themselves actively participated and contributed to, and whose results are to benefit all members of the community. Perhaps the most important task of a change agent on an ongoing activity is his/her mediating role in ensuring:

i.   that the right quantity, quality and calibre of expertise, personnel of all categories, technical *know-how*, finance, managerial and organisational experience, equipment, funds, etc., are available *when* and *where* necessary during the life cycle of the change activity and

ii.   that the activity is completed on schedule, within the budgeted resources. The time dimension of a well-planned project specifies tasks to be performed and those to be phased out at specific periods during the project cycle. This means that resources required for each set of activities to be embarked upon or phased out, at specific times, are known in advance.

It is for the project management to ensure that resources of the required quality and quantity are procured and made available at the project site sufficiently long enough before a specified activity begins or is phased out. Failure to adhere to this obviously simple practice often results in unnecessary stoppages and interruptions of work or work improperly executed. This may result not only in delays in achieving targets but more importantly in unwarranted increased cost of projects.

Efficient monitoring of activities, constant good stock checking and accurate, regular record keeping are important hallmarks aspects of this mediating roles of project management.

Accountants and Book-keepers are known to sit on approved purchasing vouchers or introduce cumbersome voucher-clearing systems for the releasing of funds destined for procuring project inputs.

Parent organisations sometimes spend project funds channeled through them and therefore make it difficult for project managers to retrieve such project funds at the time they are most needed. This does sometimes adversely affect the procurement of project inputs and the payment of project staff at the appropriate time. It is, therefore, necessary for project management to ensure that separate bank accounts are opened for project purposes for which project management have direct authority to release and disburse funds subject to efficient accounting and auditing regulations.

Sometimes project management is responsible for delays in releasing allocated funds for project use. Project accountants may not keep proper accounts and therefore are normally not able to produce the relevant receipts and documents required to recoup impress granted them. In some cases, financial reports, audited accounts etc., are unduly delayed by project accounts departments resulting in delays in release of funds. Cash flows which enable funding agencies and parent organisations to monitor the

rhythm of project expenditure and to make provision for project finances are most of the time poorly prepared, unduly delayed or not prepared at all. Sometimes in procuring project inputs, especially equipment and tools, those immediately concerned and to whose use the equipment and tools are destined are not consulted for correct specifications of equipment/tools that may best suit their needs under the prevailing conditions. As a result, project inputs may be procured which can not be used.

All the above affect the mediating role of project management and therefore deserve critical consideration in the training and recruitment of project staff. In no case should a change agent have emotional and sentimental attachments to the change activity; but if this is the case, it is important to keep it as covert as possible. On the other hand his/her actions, discussions and behaviour, must make it clear that the activity and its end result belong to the community who must ensure its proper sustained use, upkeep and maintenance.

Community mobilization is a delicate and fragile issue which should be approached with tact and care. All possible efforts must be made to minimize the slightest idea or impression of *imposition* on the part of the change initiating organisation or its agents.

CHAPTER SIX.
MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE AGENTS/PROJECT PERSONNEL

In formal organisational procedure and terminology, management refers to the actions and activities involved in, and or the manner in which the resources of an organisation, a group or community are controlled, handled or administered.

Thus conceived, management implies such **power** and **status** influencing concepts as **authority** and/or **control** over the use of resources and may equally refer to the actions of those in positions to use and exercise such authority or control over organisational resources.

Such control and/or authority should actually be **invoked** or **exerted** through recognised and laid down procedures and a **discipline** directed to an optimum and appropriate utilisation of resources. Hence, a discussion of *management of change agents* must not only address the **context** but also the **structure** and **organisational framework** within which change agents (project personnel) operate.

Organisational Structure and Management of Change Agents. (Project Personnel).

A Change Agent as defined earlier in this discussion does not operate alone. He operates within the framework and an overall philosophical and/or ideological orientation of an organisation, be it international, governmental or non-governmental/private. This organisation to which the change agent belongs or is with, in one capacity or the other, pursues a number of clearly specified objectives or goals, one of which is the particular change activities in which the change agent is involved. These activities, within the organisational guidelines and policies, are formulated and defined in terms of a specific **project** articulated in one way or another with the *main or prime organisational goals/objectives or part thereof.*

The change agent is thus, at any time, located within the structural and operational framework of a specific organisation in terms of his **assigned tasks** on a precise project of his organisation or one in whose implementation his organisation participates with others in pursuing common/shared goals/objectives.

A *project* thus becomes the main tool or instrument for initiating and implementing change activities. Hence the management of change agents becomes intricately interwoven with the management and implementation of a project, i.e., the *project process. Problems and issues of management of change agents are therefore, in the final analysis, problems and issues of project management and implementation.*

Discussions of management of change agents therefore boil down to management of a project with which the change agent identifies himself in one way or the other and/or performs, directs, controls, administers or carries out defined tasks.

It is from this perspective that discussions and analysis of project formulation, implementation and the associated problems become more meaningful for an understanding of problems and issues of management of change agents.

The Concept of a Project.

The term project is used in different contexts by different categories or people. Its usage varies from the ordinary man's understanding to highly specialised professional and technical definitions of the term. Whatever the context, the term basically retains and conveys the following central meanings:

    a.   *a plan, a proposal or an undertaking;*

    b.   *having in view the attainment of a stated purpose/task or*

    c.   *to get a specific activity carried out;*

    d.   *by a stated time period;*

    e.   *using specifically allocated resources;*

    f.   *through coordinated and concerted efforts and*

    g.   *a unified management.*

Achieving specified results by translating into practical action a conceived idea, is therefore central to a project, irrespective of what the context is. A project therefore always brings to mind *a stated result, a product, an output or a transformation* in an existing situation, etc. It is from this perspective that in the field of Development (social, economic, etc.) the concept of a project has not only a specific and well defined connotation but also should become an important tool for approaching, analysing and understanding change and development. In fact, in development planning and management of change, the concept of project can be considered as the **prime activity-planning** unit of the development planning process. Simply stated, a project can therefore be conceived as a proposal or an undertaking requiring **concerted efforts** to achieve **stated** objectives/or a set of **stated** objectives, during a **stated** time period, using **specified** resources under a **unified** management.

The United Nations Development Programme therefore defines a project as a "set of interrelated activities, amenable to unified management to achieve a specific objective in a period of time through the mobilization of certain resources. It assumes a number of interdependent measures which must be coordinated to realize the development objectives."

The UNFPA's definition of a project (UNFPA/191 REV. 215/ 1079-3.32) reinforces the basic elements in that of the UNDP. It defines a project as " a series of inter-related and coordinated activities which are conceived to achieve clearly defined objectives, within the framework of a detailed programme of activities within a given budgetary and time schedule."

Almost all conceptions of a project emphasise:

    a.   The specificity of the objective to be attained.

    b.   The inter-relationship between the activities to be carried out in a coordinated manner

    c.   The managerial element implicit in a project (explicitly stated in the UNDP definition which stresses that activities carried out in a project must not only be interrelated and coordinated but must be such as to be amenable to a unified management).

    d.   The temporal dimension of a project and its target **orientation** (which necessarily place important structural, managerial and organisational responsibilities on project implem-entation).

e.   The target of a project - the activities to be carried out and completed within a set time frame and at the end of that time must produce the targeted result - a transformation in the situation which was the object of the project activities.

f.   This is highlighted by the stress on **time scheduling** and **resource allocation** which are not only specific to project activities but must be budgeted, time scheduled and used only for project related purposes.

g.   The UNFPA's definition amplifies the crucial relevance of the **organisational frame** of a project in addition to the **managerial specifications**, noting that "projects must be part of a larger programme instead of being isolated activities." This draws attention to the crucial nature of the **institutional frame** within which a project is located to project management, as well as to the management of change agents operating on such a project.

Project Location and Links within an Organisational Structure.

It is important and necessary to emphasize that:

the **project location** within an organisational structure,
the **level** of its location within such a structure,
and the **links** it has with other related activities within the organisation,

are crucial elements that affect the translation of formulated project plans and objectives into **real** activities.

With respect to the links a specific project activity has with other related activities, it is necessary to note that in project implementation:

i.   it is **not only** the *links* the particular project activity has with other related activities within the structure in which it is located;

ii.   *but* also the *level* at which it operates within such a structural organisation that are of crucial importance.

iii. It is of even more crucial importance that any project must, in its formulation and implementation stages, take account of other activities that have taken place, are current, or will probably take place in the future in its particular environment.

In project planning and execution, provision should therefore be made for such links, nexuses, ties and/or common areas with other project efforts towards the attainment of its wider goals or objectives. This is to draw attention to the such careful and complicated processes **involved in project formulation and implementation** as:

a.   Intra and inter-organisational monitoring, the collection and exchange relevant information at different levels of decision-making.

b.   Mobilization and allocation of resources (finance, time, equipment, and personnel) which must be drawn upon for project activities. These imply decisions on the timely availability of the required **quantity** and **quality** of these resources, decisions and actions on their careful planning in terms of financial and time targets.

The project process thus creates and sets into operation an elaborate and complex activity system. This necessarily requires vigilance and commitment to project objectives and the application of an effective management system to justify the mobilisation of the resources involved by ensuring that:

a.   the project product/objective is achieved and;

b.   the need for which the project was initiated is satisfied, at least for the time in question.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

THE PROJECT PROCESS MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT AND ROLE OF CHANGE AGENTS, PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PARENT ORGANISATION (EXECUTING AGENCY) RELATIONSHIPS.

Change agents/project personnel are the crucial links between the change executing organisation and the beneficiaries of the final product of change activities (the community in which the project is carried out).

It is therefore important for the change agent to note and constantly bear in mind that:

the organisational structures;

the management styles and procedures;

the authority delegation systems and

the communication channels

evolved for the implementation of a project affect:

the efficiency,

the performance and

the motivation

of project personnel/change agents. This is so because although organisations initiate and mobilize resources for projects, it is:

individuals,

assigned specific tasks,

within the general framework of the organization,

who carry out the translation of project ideas into concrete actions in the field (a group, a community, a village, a society, etc.) to achieve project objectives. Most problems experienced by change agents attached to a project stem from any or a combination of the following:

basic misunderstanding,

confusion of roles and responsibilities,

unclear definition of use of project resources,

lack of structural and organisational clarity of functions and roles **between** parent organisations **and**

the management of projects as well as **between and/or among** executing agencies.

Although during the project formulation stage all activities and resources needed to achieve the project objective might have been clearly spelt out, there is, in most instances:

a. *no adherence by parent organisations to terms and condition specified in the project document;*

b. *non-respect of project budget.*

These result in conflicts between management of a project's parent organisation and the project staff. This in turn results **not** only in misuse of project resources for non-project activities **but** also leads to denial of project personnel of the *right quality and quantity of resources at the appropriate time and/or the inefficient performance of tasks*, resulting in delays, work hold ups, etc..

Problems Emanating from Within and Internal to Parent Organisations.

a. Most parent organisations fail to distinguish between the **regular** *activities and personnel* of the parent organisation and **those** of a project they are executing.

b. Personnel budgeted for in the project document are either not recruited or are never assigned **full time** to the project. If, and when assigned, they are usually not given the free hand to operate.

c. Their activities are **interrupted** by, and interfered with, by management of parent organisations who normally fail to accept or recognise *a separate and semi-autonomous* project process operating side by side with the activities of the main or parent organisation.

d. Rules or procedures of the parent organisation are normally extended to the management of project implementation.

e. This may not allow a project the needed flexibility to so operate as to achieve its time targets and control its budget with the required flexibility specifically provided for in the project document. The project manager is thus normally torn **between**:

    i. *loyalties* to his parent organisation and

    ii. *accountability* for *utilisation* of project equipment, vehicles, manpower, accomm-odation, and other facilities, **specifically provided for project purposes only**;

    iii. **but** for which indiscriminate requests are most of the time made by parent organisations.

The above situations normally arise when a project and its management are not physically, administratively and financially separated from those of the parent organisation.

The parent organisation may therefore be tempted to assign **project personnel** *non-project related activities* or **request the use of project resources** (especially vehicles, fuel, office equipment, stationery) for *non-project purposes* which the project personnel can not refuse for fear of victimisation or penalisation. These situations may also arise when job descriptions and authority relations are not clearly defined and separated and/or when project managers are not allowed the full range of power and authority to implement the provisions of a project document.

A head of a section of a parent organisation may at the same time act as a part-time supervising/ director of a project managed by a sub-ordinate staff of his section seconded to the project as a manager. It becomes difficult for the part-time supervising director from the parent organisation or the project manager to distinguish between the project management hierarchy and authority systems and those of the parent organisation.

This creates confusion of roles, of loyalties and misplaced use of power and authority. This situation also arises especially if a project funding exceeds in real financial and logistics terms those of the parent organisation.

Problems confronted in project implementation do not only emanate from structural, organisational, administrative and institutional constraints discussed above. Project personnel (change agents), to a significant extent, also constitute **sources** of such problems, primarily in the form of such abuses as indiscriminate use and diversion of project resources to non-project and/or personal uses.

Problems Emanating from Project Management.

1. Incompetence of project managers and other key staff.

2. Abuse of relative freedom from parent organisation to operate and manage project activities as **independent** but **parallel** activities of the parent organisation.

3. Lack of proper, appropriate and efficient planning, scheduling, administering and monitoring project resources and activities according to **budgetary** and **time** targets.

4. Record keeping and project monitoring are most of the time lacking or are erratically carried out.

5. **Indiscipline** on the part of junior project staff and **inability** of project executives to **control** and discipline staff at all levels.

    These problems are mainly due to the absence of:

    a. explicitly spelt out areas of responsibility and job *descriptions;*

    b. *performance targets and evaluation;*

    c. *clearly specified codes of conduct, and*

    d. *disciplinary procedures for the project staff.*

Problems Emanating from both Parent Organisations and Project Management.

A substantial amount of *bigotry, favouritism and incompetence* of project staff in project implementation may be explained by using a project to *recruit incompetent friends, relatives, party activists, etc.*, who are most of the time not qualified in terms of the **specifications of the jobs and tasks they carry out**.

They clench, most of the time, to such posts because:

they may be relatives of project executives;

they may have been imposed on the project by the project's parent organisation;

they may have been recruited through party officials or influential local dignitaries.

All these do adversely affect discipline, efficiency and productivity during the project process.

Problems of Professionals and Para-Professionals in Integrated Projects.

Professionals and para-professionals recruited on a project do not necessarily conceive or perceive their roles and job assignment in terms of the overall objectives of the project. They tend to cling to their professional peculiarism. They hardly cooperate with others of different professions. They refrain from engaging in certain assigned tasks they consider do not form part of their normal professional activities. They therefore **fail** to perform effectively as members of a **coordinated team**, working on the same project to achieve the same objective. This may lead to complex and serious **leadership** and **teamwork** problems in project implementation.

Integrated or Multi-Agency Projects.

In the case of integrated or multi-agency projects, the problems take different forms.

1. Some participating agencies do not see the project objectives as related to the overall objectives of their own organisation.

2. They therefore do not fulfil their part of the obligations and commitments to the project.

3. They fail or are reluctant to release staff and other resources expected of them for project purposes.

4. Moreover, they may not attend meetings for important decisions relating to the **commitment** of different participating agencies.

6. When, and if they do send a representative, this delegate may usually be of a **low rank** on the managerial scale who may not be in a position to make **commitments** on behalf of his organisation.

Government Policies/Interventions.

Government interventions may also affect the management of projects. Legislation and intermittent mini-budgets may throw out of gear project budgets, increase cost and delay or prolong duration of projects.

International Funding Agencies.

International agencies which, in most cases, finance change-oriented projects, do not only complicate the change process but infuse project personnel on their pay roll with their own philosophical or ideological orientations. This may not necessarily result in the needed coordinated network of change activities in the particular domain but do lead to **competing, conflicting and parallel** activities. Besides, *donor fatigue* and *donor loss of interest* may lead to project interruptions.

Improving Management of Change Activities and Management of Change Agents (Project Personnel).

What then can be done to improve **change (project) activity management** and the *management of change agents (project personnel)*? The answer lies in a critical review of the project process and its relation to the parent organisation acting as an executing/implementing agency of a project. In the review, efforts should be made to provide possible answers to problems and issues identified in the preceding discussions.

Objective Definition/Setting Stage.

1. The first problem area at this level, having important consequences for the implementation stage, is the identification of the objectives of the proposed activity system. This should be carried out as much as possible in collaboration with target beneficiaries after differences in orientation and perception of the problem condition (object of project activities) have been clarified and agreement reached on all-important issues.

2. The objectives should be clearly and unambiguously stated and must be understood by all parties concerned in the same manner as change initiators and community representatives. In addition, objectives should be clearly shown and demonstrated to be achievable within the limits of available resources and time constraints.

3. A clear definition of objectives is not enough. The objective must be acceptable to all concerned and must, in the specific case, be demonstrated to be the best choice that meets the needs or provides a solution for a problem at the time.

"It is vital that not only the Executive Secretary but all the staff as well, should both understand the objectives. It is equally important that Managers should play their role in determining the objectives of the organisation since their role is increasingly one of policy-making as distinct from involvement in day to day implementation."[5]

Besides, objectives must fit into the wider organisational goals of the executing organisation as well as those of other agencies operating in the same environment and in similar or related fields. An ill-defined objective breeds role confusion, conflict of interest and resource wastage at the implementation stage.

Strategy Setting Stage.

The objective setting stage is followed by a series of elaborate and systematic thought processes, laying out clearly **how** and by **what** means the set objectives can be achieved within the set time limit. This implies very careful **itemization** of the various activities and tasks, from the minutest to the most obvious. Every single imaginable task or activity should be itemized. It is important to formulate alternative strategies, to provide for alternate materials, equipment, etc., in order that selection may be made of the best alternative.

Task Identification, Task Allocation and Task Scheduling Stage.

The tendency to take certain actions or tasks for granted must be avoided. Activities and tasks thus itemized must each be examined critically within a time frame. The results of this stage should be a careful and well thought out plan and time schedule of activities with tasks identified. If the objectives are identified and achievable and plans and time schedules worked out to achieve these objectives, then the question of identification and mobilization of the requisite resources, including community resources, must be addressed. This implies estimating and budgeting each category of identified needed resources. Care must be taken not to under-estimate resources or under-budget them. The different categories of staff required must be carefully estimated and budgeted for.

Planning and Allocation of Change Agent Activities.

There is equally the need for detailed itemizing and budgeting of all equipment and infrastructure imaginable at this stage and specifying a detailed procurement plan.

At this point, a clear picture emerges of what is involved in terms of:

the different resources;

their respective cost;

the plan of procurement;

how long it will take to achieve proposed objectives, who will provide the different resources needed and

how they would be mobilized.

The Institutional Frame of Projects.

The next stage, which is a delicate one, is that of the institutional frame of the project. Where within the organisational structure, will it be located? This raises issues of implementation and control which, if not effectively addressed, may, and usually do, result in:

role conflict and role confusion;

confusion of responsibility and of authority;

*false expectation of reward, of power/authority **and, above all**, laxity and inefficiency in project management.*

It is therefore important to identify and specify the role and the area of: *competence, responsibility, authority and control,* of the parent organisation, that of the project management and all participating agencies.

These responsibilities and commitments must be **written into the project document** with the necessary provisions for ensuring their compliance. It therefore boils down to the careful identification and clear delineation of the exact location of the project organisation within the financial, administrative, authority and control systems of the parent organisation.

Parent Organisation - Project Management Relations.

This raises the issue of the **type** of relationship that must exist between the parent organisation and the project management. It is an issue of particular importance since a project implies a complex **activity system** not necessarily compatible with the activity system of the parent, executing organisation, especially in terms of a unified management. Hence the necessity for creating a separate project management to implement project activities. This implies evolving the necessary and appropriate administrative and management mechanisms with the requisite in-built power control structures and the flexibility to effectively execute project tasks under specified conditions.

This is a sensitive area of the nature and management of relations between:

a. a parent organisation and the project management; (if it involves a multi-agency projects)

b. the relationship between the staff of other agencies seconded to the project and their parent organisation.

It therefore requires well understood mechanisms of concerted action and a teamwork, all of which must be **specified, invokeable and utilized for project purposes.**

Coordination between Parent Organisation and Project Management.

It is important to evolve mechanisms of harmony between project management and parent organisations on the one hand and between project organisation and other participating agencies and the social environment on the other hand. These mechanisms of co-operation and co-ordination must be specified and clearly spelt out in terms of their use in achieving project objectives. This can be ensured by verifying that the project document (the project manager's terms of reference) contains written

commitments that all parties concerned effectively participate, perform their roles and adhere to their specified commitments.

With special reference to management of project personnel (change agents) it is of utmost importance to identify and specify within the parent organisation the human resources actually and potentially available to the project management to carry out project activities and tasks. An effective tool of the management of human resources is the establishment of carefully worked out **time and work schedules** for each section of a project and for the various categories of personnel in each section.

CHAPTER EIGHT.
INSTITUTIONAL LOCATION OF A PROJECT WITHIN THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF PARENT ORGANISATIONS

A factor which affects project management and therefore the management of project personnel, which was briefly mentioned earlier, is the institutional location of the project, more specifically the **level** of its **location** within the particular management structure of the parent organisation.

This raises issues of **who** (status) or which **Department/Section** of the parent organisation will deal directly with matters relating to the project for effective performance of tasks. It equally raises issues of project representation and efficiency, inter and intra-organisational/ ministerial/departmental relations, which sometimes lead to marginalisation of project managers and or conflict with the management of their parent organisations.

Parent Organisation's Executive Capacity vis-a-vis Project Commitments.

Before taking on an additional project, an organisation should critically examine and evaluate its own managerial and executive capacities against the extra requirements of the added demands for managerial and executive capacities to be created by a proposed project.

Sometimes organisations are so attracted by funding possibilities that they accept projects without necessarily examining their own organisational and executive capacities to carry a proposed project through effectively. This may lead to *stretching thin* and/or over working existing staff with its accompanying consequences.

Before taking on a project, it is therefore mandatory for a parent organisation to carry out a critical and exhaustive description of all the different managerial, technical and skill categories of the organisation or ministry/department. This should be done in the light of the extent to which the required **quality** and **quantity** of personnel can be made available from the parent organisation to fill positions on the project and under clearly stipulated conditions.

It is thus incumbent upon management to make sure that personnel selected for specific projects have the requisite qualities, skills, competence, temperament, etc., for the effective performance of their responsibilities.

Secondment of Personnel from Parent Organisation to Project Management.

Once it is decided to make personnel available from the parent organisation, clearly defined mechanisms for intra-organisational transfer of the identified personnel should be evolved and specified in the project document. This is to ensure that this organisational commitment to specified staff positions on the project is effected, adhered to and the commitment respected during the life of the project **unless** alternative arrangements, satisfactory to all parties, concerned are made and agreed upon. Although this point may appear trivial, failure to give it due weight at the project formulation stage may result in a number of problems that beset project implementation and the management of project personnel. It is not enough to have assurance of the release of identified personnel to a project. It important and necessary to confirm their availability from their respective **Departmental** or **Sectional** Heads of the parent organisation. This step is mandatory at the project formulation stage to ensure a smooth and effective intra-organisational working relationship between the parent organisation and project management.

It is equally necessary to ensure that important and strategic project management positions are filled with competent, experienced and qualified personnel from the parent organisation and other participating Ministries/ Departments or Agencies. On the other hand, when it is clear that the required calibre of personnel is not available in the right quantity from the parent orgnisation, provision should be made for recruiting them from outside the organisation under budget provided for this purpose.

In this regard, it must be noted that over-optimism on the part of managers as to what can be achieved by the existing personnel of an organisation can explain, to a substantial extent, the failure of projects executed by parent organisations to achieve targeted objectives. It is therefore important not only to make provision for the recruitment of additional personnel where necessary, but where personnel is seconded from other organisations or departments, it becomes necessary to ensure their commitment and full involvement in project activities.

Inter - Sectoral Projects.

In the case of integrated projects involving a number of participating agencies, with personnel of different, specialised backgrounds, the situation is more complex. The need for firmer organisational commitment is greater still. In this case, in order to ensure organisational commitment to transfer or second personnel to a project and ensure that the personnel thus transferred or seconded are committed to the project management for the duration of their transfer or secondment, it is suggested that apart from these organisational commitments being included in the main project document:

i.   a separate inter-organisational document be signed by all participating agencies, in which:

ii. each organisation's commitments and rights should be explicitly stipulated and

iii. effective means of complying, agreed to by all parties concerned.

For example, the Community Based Rehabilitation project for People with Disabilities (CBRD) involves inter-sectoral collaboration and teamwork among:

- the Department of Social Welfare;

- the Department of Community Development;

- the Ministry of Education;

- the Federation of People with Disabilities (FODA);
- the District/Community in which a project operates.

Each of these agencies has its main/global sector objectives of which disability issues may constitute a **major, partial or marginal** concern, thus, affecting the amount of resources devoted to disability issues. But, since the input of each of these agencies, at the appropriate point in the project cycle, is essential for the achievement of the project objectives, it becomes mandatory that each agency is made to clearly spell out and phase out:

a.   its responsibilities and commitments in terms of resources :- human, material, financial, etc.;

b.   conditions under, and methods by, which the above commitments will be met.

All documents containing commitments of the different participating agencies should be critically discussed and reviewed at a meeting by top level representatives from each agency who are in a position to, or have mandate to, commit resources on behalf of their agencies.

Each document should be carefully reviewed in terms of:
i.   dequacies of resource commitment and areas covered;

ii.   elimination of duplication of activities;

iii.   identification of joint activities;

iv.   relevance of qualification and experience of each agency's staff to be seconded to the project **and**

v.   joint staff training workshops and team work strategies.

The umbrella agency for the project (in the particular case of the CBRD the Department of Social Welfare) may be charged with coordination and ensuring that each participating agency complies with its budgeted terms of joint commitments, agreed upon and signed by responsible spokesmen of all participating agencies.

It should be noted that one of the major weaknesses in the implementation of the Ghana National Family Planning Programme (GNFPP) was the lack of commitment of participating agencies. Attendance at Coordinating Committee Meeting was not only erratic but representation was mostly by lower level officials who could not commit their agency's resources or were not in a position to explain any slackness in their agency's participation and fulfillment of obligations.

The Project Document.

The points discussed under project formulation are normally presented in what is known as a project document which becomes the main terms of reference for the project manager for translating the formulated project ideas into concrete activities which strictly respect the resources allocated, as budgeted, and the time scheduled.

With a well formulated project, time scheduled, costed, well budgeted and presented in a document approved for funding, the next stage, the translation of the contents of the project document into concrete activities is likely to face a minimum amount of problems.

CHAPTER NINE.
SOME CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A GENERAL REVIEW

Autonomy of the Project

It is important that a project has considerable autonomy and flexibility, with respect to use of the facilities provided for in the project document, of the parent organization but under its overall control for accountability, external representation at higher levels and continuity of employment of staff seconded to the project when implementation is completed.

Project implementation sets in motion a complex activity system, which requires competent staff of the right calibre and quantity at all, levels during the project cycle. Although a project may be formulated with the necessary in-built flexibility, pressure from parent organisations and unnecessary bureaucratic procedures normally lead to under-staffing in most cases. Where the specified number of staff is recruited, it may not be of the required calibre for the type of tasks to be performed.

Job Description and Conditions of Work.

The project manager has to elaborate detailed job descriptions for each identified task with the required qualification for the incumbents. He must ensure that only persons who satisfy the specified educational or professional qualifications for specified posts are recruited.

Recruitment of all other persons, irrespective of their origin, must be resisted because project work involves specialised knowledge. Hence all attempts must be made by a project manager to minimise loss of effectiveness of personnel due to weaknesses in the recruitment process and procedure. One problem area in the recruitment of qualified personnel to project positions is the issue of job security or continuous employment after the completion of a project. If good working relations exist between project management and the parent organisation, and if the parent organisation is committed to the objectives of the project, there should be no reason for the parent organisation refusing to second qualified personnel to the project.

The above not withstanding, the project manager in developing countries faces enormous problems of matching job requirements with qualifications of personnel proposed to fill vacant posts. This remains a weak area in project management.

Team Building, Teamwork and Team Spirit.

Team building and teamwork constitute another difficult area in project management and implementation. A project exists because its activities are to produce a result, the objective of the project. All activities of the different levels and calibre of project personnel must be oriented towards this project objective. Hence the first duty of the project management is to devise mechanisms of co-operation and collaboration to effectively organize the personnel into a working team around the project objectives.

This may be best achieved by clearly defining the common purpose or objective and the specific role each member of the team is to play in achieving this common purpose. But this becomes difficult with staff from different professional backgrounds or from different agencies working on an integrated project. The tendency is for the different professionals to emphasize their professional interests, it is the duty of project management to gradually direct the personnel to work *as a team, with a team spirit*, towards achieving project objectives as scheduled.

To this end, the project organisation needs to be as flexible as possible, as non-rigidly bureaucratic as possible. With stress on factors that make for high motivation and high achievement orientation. Attempts to impose management and accounting procedures of parent organisations should be resisted as much as practicable.

Important factors that influence the degree of team spirit and the extent of teamwork in project implementation are the style of management, the personality and attitude of project managers. In this respect, the following observation of J.D. Greig is worth noting.

".... I want to draw attention also to the absolute necessity of TEAMWORK. In no single organisation can one person determine in a dictatorial manner, just how best the organisation's objectives can be achieved. He needs to consult his colleagues for their advice, not merely on matters pertaining to their own speciality but he should also give them free rein to express their views on the broad canvas of the organisation's over all programme.... There is a tendency to forget this principle at all levels of an organisation's structure."[6]

Teamwork and Team Spirit, it must be emphasised, are enhanced through established working committees comprised of personnel drawn from a broad spectrum of disciplines and specialities to advise on most appropriate strategies and policies to achieve targets. On the other hand regular staff meetings allow personnel of various sections to express their views and for management to explain policies. Such a system allows for both top bottom and bottom top systems of communication instead of the usual top to bottom system of communication. It permits dialogue and exchange of views among the various levels of the organisational structure as well as providing efficient channels of feed back to management.

Maintenance and Control of Equipment and Project Resources.

An aspect of project implementation that deserves serious attention is the area of maintenance and repair of equipment. There is a need for project managers to develop the *culture of maintenance and wastage management consciousness*.

Control and Record Keeping.

To ensure efficiency, project management must institute simple but effective record keeping systems for management purposes as well as for reporting and monitoring of activities. A simple Bar Chart or Gantt Chart system is to be preferred to the more complicated PERT/COST systems.

The Bar Chart is simpler to understand and easier to use in presenting:

the timing and sequence of activities,

monitoring staff turnovers,

supply and procurement of materials and equipment, and for

monitoring cash flows.

The Bar Chart equally helps to know, at any point in time:

what has been achieved;

what is left to be done;

whether specific activities are

on schedules, behind schedule or ahead of schedule and

to institute the necessary remedial action.

Monitoring and evaluation procedures have to be built into project formulation at the very beginning to enable project managers to check on progress and, when ever necessary, introduce modifications and changes in the course of implementation.

The project manager has a range of control devices he may choose from and use. These include inspections (regular or surprise), reports (formal and informal), feed backs, etc. Reports are useful to project managers as a means for checking on progress and for introducing corrective or remedial actions when these become necessary in particular circumstances.

An efficient budgeting and regular accounting is an important aspect of project management which must be built into the management communication and information systems. These monitoring, control and built in evaluation mechanisms thus constitute project management tools that introduce internal control mechanisms as integral aspects of management activity.

For example, regular reporting and feed backs from various sections provide useful data for continuous evaluation of performance as well as identification of areas that require immediate or periodic attention.

Whatever the form of control, effective record keeping and an efficient system of *non-coercive supervision* are key elements in effective project management, hence in the management of project personnel/of change agents. The control element in management of project personnel should be matched with appropriate:

motivational and remuneration systems;

morale and high participation boosting management styles;

carefully elaborated prospects of career development and

feelings of self-fulfillment.

Management of change agents is a delicate affair. Since change agents are almost always found assigned to specific tasks on projects attached to organisations, it becomes imperative for:

parent organisations,

policy makers,

top management, executives and

all who occupy positions of authority and responsibility

to have a clear understanding, appreciation and comprehension of the project management process because they:

a. Take decisions on mobilisation, allocation and release of resources, provide organisational facilities, authorise and sanction their use.

b. Decide on the nature and extent of power and authority to delegate to managers of projects executed on behalf of their organisation.

c. In the final analysis, render account of project achievement and

d. Are, in turn, held accountable to higher authorities for resources mobilised for a project.

Hence the necessity of an effective grasp by top management of the following two key features of the project process which involves:

i. an infinitely great variety of project activities and

ii. the difference in *nature* and the *uniqueness of each project and its requirements.*

Top management and executives will then:

iii. become better conversant with what is involved in project formulation and implementation;

iv. be in a better position to appreciate the importance and relevance or otherwise of the attainment of project objectives to those of the parent organisation;

v. exercise authority with the necessary flexibility of operation over those entrusted with the responsibility of implementing;

vi. be better placed to formulate policies and take relevant, timely and appropriate decisions relating to projects.

Points **iii-vi** will strengthen and enhance understanding, communication and preparedness of the parent organisation to:

a. engage, whenever required, the necessary legal formalities on behalf of the project.

b. be prepared to represent, fight for and defend project demands and requirements at governmental and other levels.

Conclusion.

It is imperative for project managers in particular, and project personnel in general, to be clear about the project they are entrusted with to manage and work on. They must be perfectly conversant with what is involved in the responsibility entrusted to them if they are to operate effectively to achieve targeted goals.

Management of change agents involves more complex and complicated processes than are apparent to the uninitiated and must therefore be approached with much careful understanding of the processes involved.

APPENDIX.

A GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS IN PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

IDEA.

A thought or knowledge, formed or represented consciously in the mind.

It can be formed *tentatively* or without much *reflection* or *consideration* and may have little basis in fact/ actual experience. In such a case, it is referred to as a **notion**. An **idea** can be a **notion** or a **thought** about some thing in the mind, i.e., a **thought** or a feeling that something is *probable*, that is, an idea is a conception of something that exists in the mind potentially or actually as a product of mental activity.

REALISATION OF AN IDEA.

a. This means the actualization of an idea. It involves taking practical measures to translate **an idea** into **a concrete form** of the specific object in mind or in view.

PLAN.

An arrangement of activities or steps, worked out before hand, in such a sequence or order as to realise or accomplish an idea.

a. **A plan** can equally be conceived as a detailed outline picturing or depicting a conceived idea, showing the relative *sequence* and position of the various steps/parts or activities.

b. **A plan/scheme** can be conceived as an arrangement of parts or activities for implementing something or an idea, conceived in advance. The essence of a *plan* is thus to consider and arrange in **advance**.

A SCHEME implies a number of interrelated parts/steps or activities arranged together according to pre-determined plan. **A scheme** is therefore an ordered system such as a plan or a design for a specific work or activity - e.g., a **scheme** of manufacturing soap from ashes of cocoa pod. For our purpose it is sufficient to note that **plan** and **scheme** are normally used interchangeably, but a **scheme** tends to be more operational than a **plan.**

SYSTEM.

A group of **things** or **parts** working together in a regular relation as a **unit** A system can also be conceived as an ordered set of interrelated ideas, principles, rules, procedures, plans, etc., in an organised form. The concept of **system** has built into it the related concept of **orderliness**. Systematic thus implies something carried out in a step by step procedure.

GOAL/AIM.

Is a broader statement of what is ultimately to be achieved. It is the end in view.

OBJECTIVES. (S.M.A.R.T.)

An objective is a goal/aim in view. An objective must be a **specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound** statement of what is to be achieved. *(S.M.A.R.T.)*.

ACTIVITY.

In its simplest form, an activity means **something we do**. An activity in project terms implies a specified form of supervised action or field of action. Thus, a ***project activity*** implies tasks or things carried out in connection with the achievement of the objective of a project.

A project activity equally means a specified form of *supervised* and *planned* action in connection with a project. Thus in the last analysis, a project may be broken down into a number of its components activities.

RESOURCES.

Wealth, supply of goods, materials, etc., which a person or a country or an organisation has or can use.

- Something which helps in doing/achieving something else.
- Something which can be turned to for support or help.

Resource normally implies an available supply of something that can be drawn upon when needed.

TYPES OF RESOURCES.

Financial Resources - funds to carry out expenses incurred in the implementation of project activities.

Material Resources - Equipment, tools, machinery, vehicles, buildings, etc., required for project activities.

Human Resources - Personnel of various training and skill categories to carry out the activities connected with a project. Human resources in project terms equally imply resources in experience, knowledge and special activities, know-how and expertise.

Time Resources - Time is a crucial resource in project planning and implementation but its importance is normally underestimated.

Non quantifiable Resources - These are activities upon which monetary/price values cannot be placed. For example, favourable cultural, climatic and political environment, legal provisions, government concessions of various kinds, good will of government and of the community concerned.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE.

The quantity, quality and use of the various resources for project purposes should be so carefully planned as to have the *right* quantity/ quality/amount/number of the resource at the time required, having sufficient reserves easily accessible to be drawn upon as well as having efficient maintenance, repair and replacement facilities. Resource allocation, management, maintenance, etc., are all crucial to a successful project implementation.

MANAGEMENT.

In addition to the definitions of management in the main discussion, **management** also connotes the process of planning, organising, directing, coordinating and controlling projects, institutions, organisations, etc.

BUDGETING.

The process of estimating probable future income and expenditure and/or the process of itemising and summarizing all probable expenditure and income for a given period. This process systematically embodies plans for meeting expenses.

A **budget** can therefore be conceived as a total sum allocated for a specific or **particular purpose** for a **specific time period.** In project terms, budgeting implies:

1. analysing;
2. itemizing and
3. systematically planning and costing in advance, all resource - inputs and outputs (money, time, personnel etc.)

JUSTIFICATION.

Demonstration or proof showing or stating that what is to be done is **right, needed, timely, appropriate, achievable and reasonable**. It involves furnishing evidence, grounds, defense or conditions (in form of facts and circumstances) showing the *well-founded basis* of a project.

Justification in project formulation also means a clear statement of expected contribution of a project to the problem for which answers are sought through a project activity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

This involves giving details of identified relevant factors, conditions, resources, possibilities, constraints, etc, likely to affect the realization of the objectives of a project.

PROJECT SCHEDULING/PHASING.

Involves the preparation of a list or a statement of details of **time targets** for beginning and completing specific activities or tasks. This boils down to drawing up a **time-dimension** of planned project activities, allocating **tasks** to be performed, stating **dead lines** or **targets** to be attained and aspects of activities to be either phased out, introduced or completed.

PROJECT PROPOSAL.

This is a document giving an advance information on a proposed project to a higher **official**, a **funding agency, a government**, etc., for approval, comments, acceptance/rejection or modification of the principles, procedures, etc. of the proposal. The project proposal contains information on the proposed project in a **condensed** rather than a **detailed** form. All descriptions must be as brief as possible. An essential element for consideration of a project proposal is **cost** and availability of **resources**.

PROJECT DOCUMENT.

This is a final document containing details of formulation of the project, methods and strategies by which the project is to be implemented, details of time phasing with deadlines and outputs, details of resource utilization and a detailed budget for the project.

The project document becomes the basis of project implementation in that it is the contents of this document that are to be translated into concrete activities, expenditures, etc, during the life of the project.

CONSIDERATIONS IN OBJECTIVE SETTING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF OBJECTIVES.

1. What led to the identification of the problem and to the decision to formulate a project to address the problem?
2. Consideration of the general situation and how the problem may develop if left unchecked.
3. Previous activities to address the problem and what has been the effect of what has been done on the problem?
4. What is the interest of the organisation concerned?
5. Evaluation of previous activities and results obtained?
6. Evidence for need and/or demand for a workable solution.
7. How attainable, realistic, specific is what is to be accomplished ?
8. What is the time involved.
9. Relevance of the objectives to the community's/nation's stated priority?
10. What target groups are involved or would be affected?
11. Where (location) would the activities take place and what is the magnitude of change involved?

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